

MILL RIVER AREA

MAP #5 – AMHERST OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS SERIES

The Mill River Greenbelt is the core of North Amherst's open space network, with more than 90 acres spread along the scenic and historic corridor of Cushman Brook and the Mill River. The Town's first conservation land acquisitions were in the lower Mill River floodplain, a series of small purchases from Stephen Puffer, Jr., that began in 1963. It was also the Puffer family who ran a profitable ice business at Puffer's Pond until the 1930's.

The Mill River complex includes Puffer's Pond, the Upper and Lower Mill River Conservation Areas, and the adjacent Pulpit Hill Conservation Area (part of the former Ruxton property).

The properties in the 92-acre Mill River and Puffer's Pond area include:

- Eight donated parcels totaling 16.9 acres, some of them gifts made through the Kestrel Trust, over the period 1963 through 1997.
- Twelve purchased parcels totaling 60.8 acres acquired over the period 1963 through 1986, several with state and federal funding assistance.
- One former one-half-acre building lot on State Street acquired in trade in 1992.
- An additional 13.9-acre parcel located on Sand Hill Road, transferred from School Department control to Conservation control by vote of Town Meeting in 1999.

The adjacent Pulpit Hill Conservation Area is an 11.8-acre parcel purchased with Self-Help funding in 1995 along with an additional 25 acres acquired for general Town use.

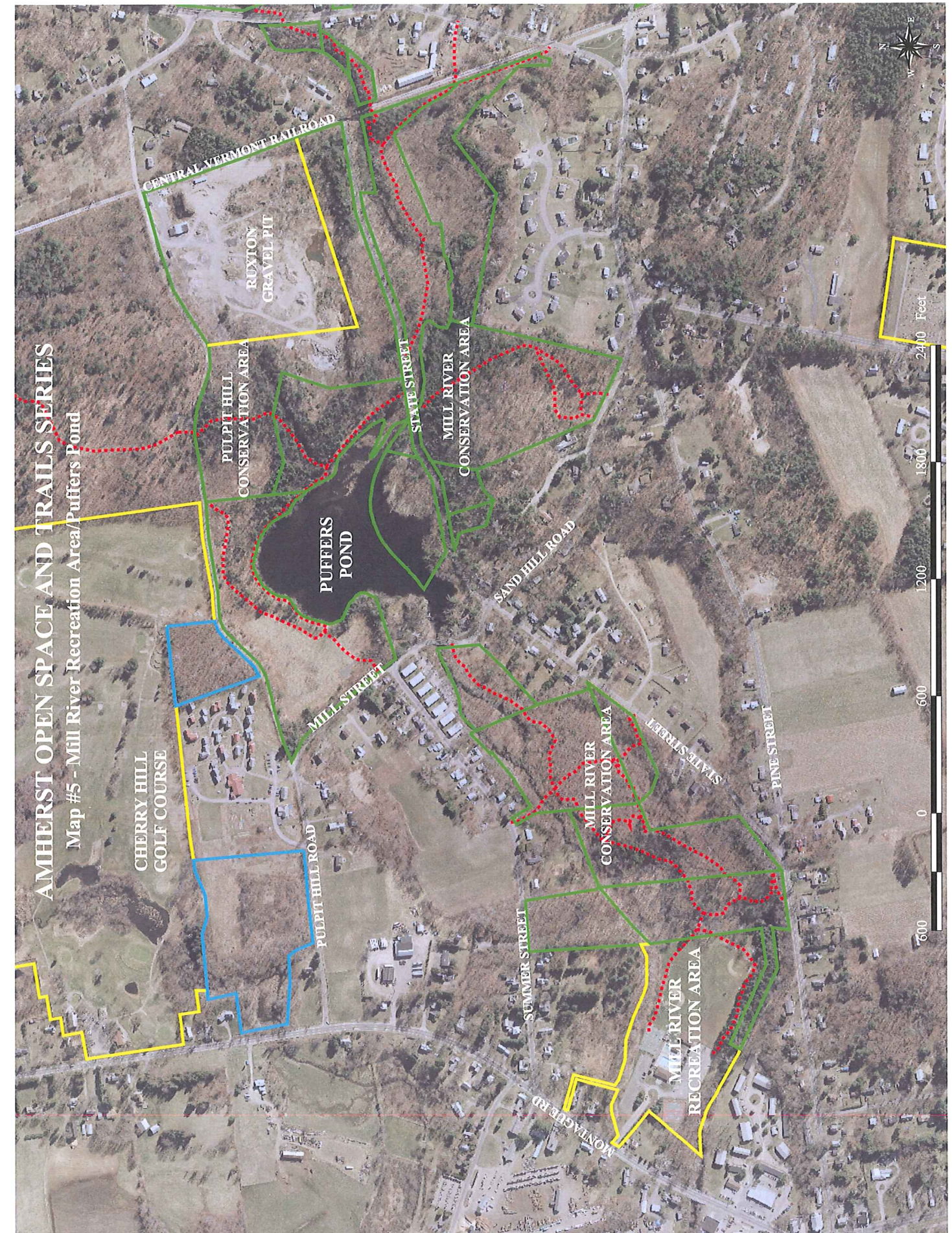
The Robert Frost Trail Mill River section runs from Flat Hills Road through private woodlands to Market Hill Road, crosses Bridge Street, follows Cushman Brook to Puffer's Pond, then heads northerly to Pulpit Hill Road.

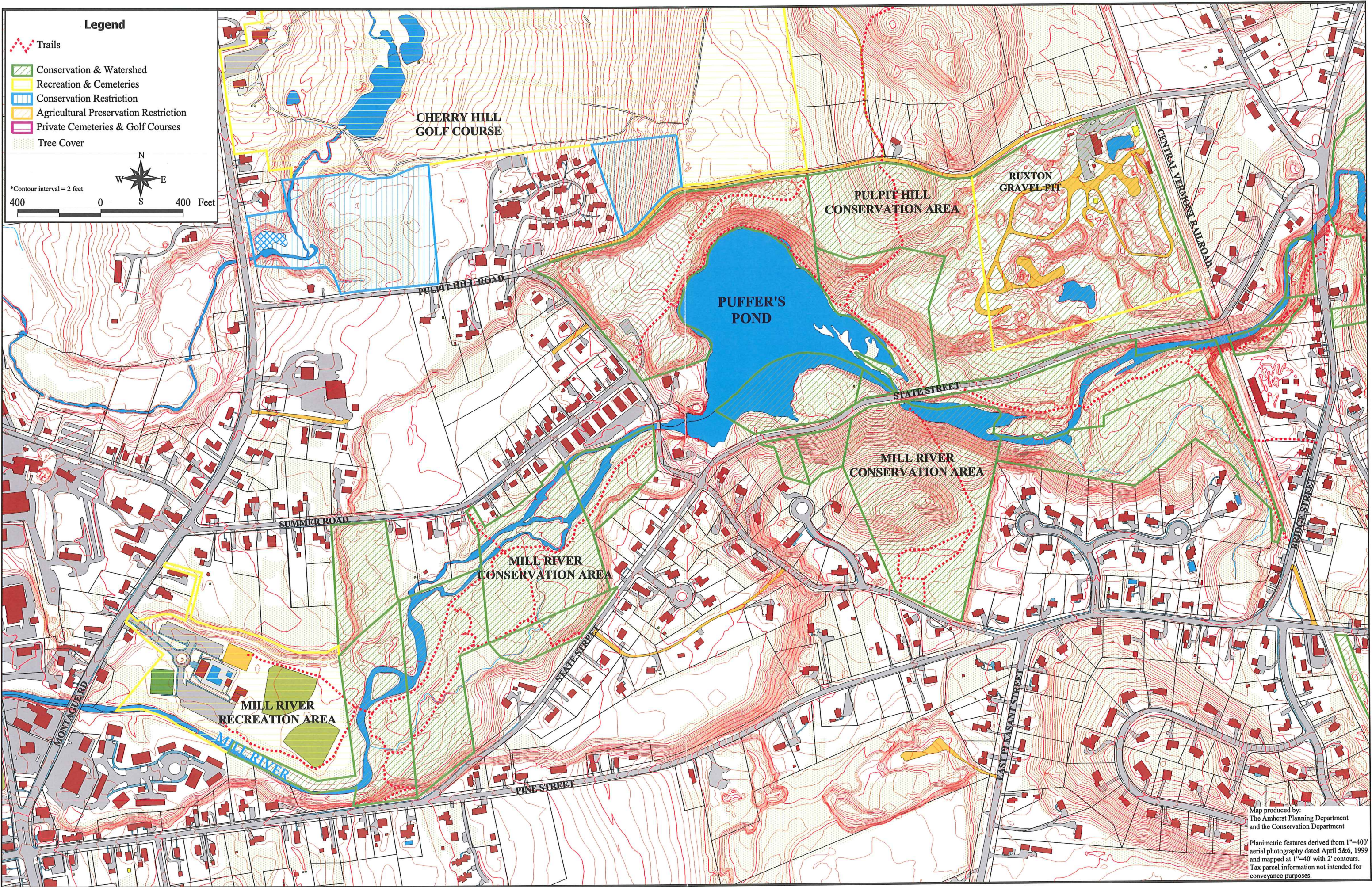
Off-road parking for this section is available at Puffer's Pond just north of the dam on Mill Street, and at the Mill River Recreation Area off Route 63 0.2 mile north of the North Amherst traffic light. One can also park along the north side of State Street east of Sand Hill Road in the vicinity of the pond, although traffic congestion is a problem on hot summer days. The walk from Route 63 through the Lower Mill River area, past the dam, around the pond, and on up Cushman Brook on the Robert Frost Trail to Bridge Street – with several available detours shown on the trail map on the previous page – can take from half an hour to an hour. Trails through the Sand Hill Road parcel, which leave the south side of the road near its intersection with Pine Street, pass through open woods and down through a tall hemlock grove to Puffer's Pond. The part of the Robert Frost Trail east of the pond, known as the Kevin Flood Trail, is accessible for wheelchairs and visually impaired users. The Kevin Flood Trail continues, as the Egg Trail, south east to Cushman Village and the small common there.

The Conservation Commission asks that those using Puffer's Pond treat the site as a quiet, family-friendly, conservation area. We ask your help in keeping the area clean and safe.

Regulations for Puffer's Pond include the following:

- * Swim at your own risk. Conservation Department rangers are on duty May 1 through September 30 during most daylight hours, but there are no lifeguards.
- * Trespassing on the dam or the adjacent cliffs is not allowed.
- * No alcohol or glass containers are allowed.
- * Dogs are not allowed on the south (main) beach; they are allowed on the north beach only before 10 am or after 6 pm and they are not allowed in the water of the pond. Dogs are allowed anywhere on the Upper and Lower Mill River trails and in the Mill River and Cushman Brook, where dog swimming holes are available.
- * When the north beach parking area off Mill Street, just north of the dam, is open, its gate will be closed by or before 7:30 pm and cars should exit by that time.
- * The pond area closes at dusk.





Map produced by:
The Amherst Planning Department
and the Conservation Department

Planimetric features derived from 1"=400'
aerial photography dated April 5&6, 1999
and mapped at 1"=40' with 2' contours.
Tax parcel information not intended for
conveyance purposes.